



# Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

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**For Immediate Release – October 13, 2005**  
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## PSC Takes Step to Enhance Wireless Emergency Services in Wisconsin

MADISON – The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (PSC) has taken another step in greatly improving the quality of emergency services in Wisconsin. In a decision today, the Commission determined the boundaries for how Wireless Enhanced 911 grants will be awarded to counties' emergency service departments and wireless providers. The enhanced 911 technology will allow emergency dispatchers to pinpoint exact locations where wireless calls are made.

"Wireless 911 will allow emergency personnel to respond more efficiently to cell phone calls," said Chairperson Daniel Ebert. "These upgrades will improve public safety in Wisconsin and will provide a further measure of security for all wireless customers."

Without this technology, emergency service dispatchers must obtain the location of a wireless caller verbally. In many instances, callers cannot give their exact location because they are too sick, too injured or they simply do not know their exact location. Examples of these circumstances range from car accidents in remote areas to victims of crime. The system also allows locating callers that make false threats.

"Wireless 911 service is critical for the safety and security of Wisconsin citizens and visitors," said Commissioner Mark Meyer. "Given our rural counties and expansive forests, this capability is invaluable to getting help to those in need."

Waukesha is one county in Wisconsin that has already implemented the enhanced wireless 911 technology. Rich Tuma, Director of Emergency Preparedness at the Waukesha County Communications Center, has witnessed how the enhancements have saved several lives in the Waukesha area. "Wireless 911 has helped emergency responders tremendously," said Tuma. "Each month we see an increase of calls from wireless phones, much more than from land lines. This only validates why the service is crucial to the safety of people in Wisconsin."

Duke Ellingson, Dane County Public Safety Communications Director, believes it is imperative for Dane County, and all of Wisconsin to update their systems in order to utilize the enhanced 911 technology. "The public expects us to know where they are when they dial 911," Ellingson said. "Without wireless 911, we cannot do this for cell phone callers."

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In 2004, the Wisconsin Legislature passed and Governor Jim Doyle signed legislation establishing the grant program which will help cover costs to implement wireless 911. Last fall the Commission adopted rules to address which costs are eligible for reimbursement.

The PSC received requests for reimbursement of \$37 million from county government groups and nearly \$65 million from wireless providers. In today's decision, the Commission approved over \$5 million for improved computer-aided dispatch equipment, nearly \$3 million for relay network expenses and a portion of requested costs incurred for mapping information needed for locating callers. Once total authorized costs for the program are determined, a uniform monthly surcharge will be set for wireless customers and will sunset in three years.

Documents associated with this decision, can be viewed on the PSC's Electronic Repository System at <http://psc.wi.gov/>. Click on ERF System, select Search Electronic Repository System and enter docket 05-TR-104.

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